

# Fortnightly Sermon

By  
JAMES VILA BLAKE  
Minister Third Unitarian Church  
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## ADMIRATION, HOPE, LOVE.

"Now abide Faith, Hope, Love; and the greatest of these is Love.—I Cor.,  
xiii, 13.  
"We live by Admiration, Hope and Love."—Wordsworth.

All Paul's writings show plainly that these words must be understood according to the ideas of religion which were current among the Christians. With these ideas Paul's soul was on fire. To him Faith meant belief that Christ was the appointed Savior of mankind, the messenger and teacher from heaven whose death was a propitiatory sacrifice by which all the common sacrifices of the temple were done away, and paid in one forever, and the world saved. Hope meant confidence in a blissful hereafter, a home in the kingdom of heaven, soon to come, a place in the glorious army of the saved secured by the sacrifice of Christ to those who embraced it; for the dead should arise, to come back in glory, and those who were not dead should be caught up into the air and changed in the twinkling of an eye to meet Christ and share his triumph. Love meant kindness and tender fellowship among the brethren; but also an immense unlimited fellowship with all men, a devotion to mankind, an enthusiasm for the great salvation *as offered to all*, a wish and a labor to embrace the whole world in it. For Paul, though a Jew, by no means would hear of any Jewish fold of Grace. Fervent in love and burning in words, he announced liberty from the Jewish law and the calling of the gentiles. And this liberty in Love and Love in liberty he called greater than the Faith or the Hope!

Now, for us of course, the special circumstances have vanished. With them have gone too the restricted meaning of the text. But the words, in a larger sense easily settled on them, indeed haunting or hovering over the local and temporary sense of them, like a spirit, are grand words. They have a course to run world-wide and time-long.

Wordsworth has a line which is the same as these words of Paul, with the enlarged sense which lapse of centuries, and the spiritual growth of the world, supply. The poet says, " We live by Admiration, Hope and Love." This is the Pauline three, Faith, Hope and Love. For Faith has deep color of awe and wonder in it; and Admiration means wonder, especially, in present usage, wonder mingled with pleasing emotions, as approbation, esteem, love or veneration. To wonder is health, strength, joy. If I must let wonder slip at the beck of books, if explanation dissolve awe, then better the ancient poetry, that peopled tree, hill, sod, clouds and waters with living spirits,—so might I have visions

"that should make us less forlorn,  
So might I standing by this pleasant lea  
Behold old Proteus rising from the sea,  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

But wonder grows with knowledge. For a brute-stare sees only the outside; the which may be new, odd, foreign, but never wonderful. For all things are like words. New syllables may be strange, but if admirable, 'tis in what they signify. Conceive a savage, a bushman, a hottentot, or whatever one may be the noblest of all children of the forest, led through a concourse of manufactures. There would be astonishment; or if more, a perplexed amazement, helpless, bewildered, terrified. But astonishment, stupefaction, bewilderment, are not wonder. The intelligent and civilized man, especially one who has a trained and stored faculty, walks among a prodigious display of nature and mankind calmly, joyfully, with a rising exhilaration of wonder. Wonder is born of knowledge, especially of knowledge so brooded as to bring the mind to life and give not merely apprehension but comprehension, not information only, but insight and power.

Once I stood with a thoughtful and eloquent preacher looking at some works of one of the most notable mechanics I ever knew, a man of great attainments, a very delicate workman, an inventor of rare and facile genius and of scientific knowledge. The next Sunday, with the mechanic, I listened to the preacher. After the grand sermon the man of handicraft went to the man of pen-craft and said he was filled with wonder at the great dis-

course, and especially at the sermons from week to week; "not," said he, "so much at this sermon, or any one, for I know the power of work and time, and I can conceive how you could bring forth such a thing by long labor and slowly and in small numbers; but how you can be ready with high discourses every week, and all so like in fine quality, is a matter of great wonder to me. The abundance, efflorescence, the perpetual out-pouring, confounds me." Now, it so happened that the preacher, after looking at the mechanic's engines, had been regarding him with the greatest wonder and expressing the same to me. He answered him that he looked with a kind of awe on the mechanic's power over intractable substance, that he marveled at his endless resources of ingenuity, that his skill and fertility were great wonders to him, and that the outpouring from his mind of one device after another and of engines that moved like life, seemed to him like a miracle. Thereon I saw that the root of the mutual wonder of these men was an equal appreciation of the cost of an idea, and that, knowing and understanding this, each must go wondering always at ideas in proportion as they exceeded or varied from his own domain of labor. I perceived that there was no health for either of them but in admiring the other, with reverence.

It is happiness and health to wonder at common things, that is, to perceive in common and ordinary matters underlying laws, meaning, effects, infinite relations. And indeed, if at all we are to have the health and life of admiration, we *must* wonder at wayside events. For who has large and adventurous things? Great opportunities, imposing spectacles, vast experiences, grandeur and might, draw near rarely, and to few. With all persons, routine is tame; many—what else but routine have they? Only the few (and pity it is to say so; sometime it will be otherwise) float on the ocean or climb majestic mountains, or see continents of ice, or travel among strange people, or know what the tropics are, or traverse the heavens with the eye of a great lens. But the many are not left comfortless. They have the resources of wonder within themselves, if so be that they have enlarged both *mind* and *feeling*. Having no Alps near, and no way of journeying to them, have we then no hills unto which to lift up our eyes? Nay, we may go mountain-climbing among our neighbors' moral qualities, among common interests of life,

wonted facts of experience, familiar expressions of faces, the ordinary substances of daily use, the acknowledged beauties of the earth and the uniform sublimity of the sky. For herein are heights and depths unexplored. But the explorers must be Knowledge, Humility, Admiration.

To wonder is to put things in their true places, to see them as they are, in their unity, not detached but existing one in an another, inhering together in one individual majesty. A philosopher pondered on the spectacle of a fly walking on the stone pillar of a great cathedral, being occupied wholly with the roughness and crevices of the surface of the pillar it walked on. Now, it is well to be as the fly to a degree, as indeed we must be, and look at things one by one; but if we put them never again together in one thought, as they are in their being, we shall not know the temple we live in, under the dome of the sky. Wonder becomes worship when we look with awe while before our eyes and to our rapt apprehension the One goes forth in the Many and the Many return again into the One.

Hope is the next element of life, according to apostle and poet. Paul gives hope a very wide and deep foundation, in another epistle. He says, in his letter to the Romans (v. 4) that we ought to take heart in our troubles, because tribulation worketh patience and patience probation, or proving of ourselves that we may know what we are, and probation hope. Thus Paul seats hope in discipline of character. It is to him a power of the soul that grows with the exercise of the soul, with insight, perception, exaltation.

Hope dwells in what some ancient thinkers called the "pleroma," fullness, the round heaven of all possibilities, the portal of perpetual creation. The past is gone, gone with glories, with crowns, triumphs, revelations; but GONE, as if no glories or triumphs ever were. The present goes while we speak of it. It is but lapse, flow, motion, the rush of a stream, the ascent of flame, or a pause, as it were, in the eternal ongoing that we may note the idea of duty,—a divine pause thereby, and yet a speck, a mote in a vast space, a little island beaten by an illimitable sea. In the sea are the treasures of mystery, invitation, courage, majesty. What is the past or the present before the eternity and infinity of Hope? But the future comes on without failure

or error, becoming every instant the present and forthwith swallowed in the past, yet undiminished, the "pleroma" of possibilities, where Hope has infinity to shine over, like a sun vast enough to be the center of space.

"In the future thou shalt find  
How far the fact hath left behind  
Thy fondest dreams."

We live in the future, as apostle and poet say, because, though here in the present moment we be stayed with duty, with divinity dwelling in the unconditional OUGHT, in the last Scripture of all revelation, yet the springs of our life are in the ever-becoming. "Hear O Israel,—the ETERNAL is God, the ETERNAL is One."

"Whether we be young or old,  
Our destiny, our being's heart and home  
Is with Infinitude, and only there;  
With Hope it is, Hope that can never die,  
Effort and expectation and desire,  
And something evermore about to be."

This it is that holds us, as it has been said of Beethoven's music that its great splendor is the rush of it, as it seems, from an inexhaustable source, where there is more, more, more, and still without end, more.

Hope is not a wish. We may wish things which we cannot have because they are impossible; or it is certain we shall not have them. As for example, that we had wings and could float in the air like birds, to skim mountain peaks by a delicious aerial exercise; or that we could visit the moon or planets; or that we could have long years of traveling on this earth. But Hope is *desire assuaged with reason*. The reasons may be external, as those for hoping to live from year to year, or to complete some work; or internal, in the mind itself, which seems to foresee or forefeel something, by force of its own nature; as the hope of an inner development, of the justification of some great dream, of the perfection of some sight or thought now dim within us, clouded, half-seen, half-heard, but foretelling some great perception yet to come. A friend wrote me, "Somehow I seem to myself to be always on the threshold of something much better than ever yet I have done."

The more a hope rises inwardly, apart from circumstances,

beyond the court of will, the grander the hope is, because it rests not on the counting of events but roots in the nature of things. Such a hope is the immortal life. Just as Paul's, *Faith*, meaning belief in a special dispensation, is expanded by the poet into the grander thought of worship which is intelligent awe and wonder confronting creation, so the hope of immortal life is lifted from the dramatic triumph of a scheme or of one great person, to an inheritance of thought itself, to a hope founded on grounds internal and spiritual, asking no report from any outward condition, accepting indeed all the intimations that rain from the heavens on every side, but independent of all and needing only the soul's knowledge of itself. Hope is not proof, not sight, but wish with grounds. When sublime, as when the wish is vast and the grounds inward, like the hope of everlastingness, it is not to be pushed away jauntily or sullenly or defiantly, for that will be but a pedant's vanity or a clown's ignorance or a lordling's pride. It is true, indeed, that we may take this mighty hope and glory unfairly, thereby stripping duty of its dignity, its design and defence; true that so it may be described as to make it no more than the ravishing or horrible reward of this life's deeds, the indolent refuge of virtue or the idle torment of vice. But this is abuse and defamation. Still it endures, that dream which arises in us when sense is shut, which, awaking, we remember in spite of sense; it is still that hope whose ground of existence is wholly in the soul itself and asks no leave to be from any outward things, nor from any such dreads extinction. It has the mark of majesty. It is a hope worthy of the mind and has been a spring of life in high souls. Says a writer, "An immortal soul of life, a life kept close to the imperishable, knows of the deathlessness, and none other can know \* \* \* All in general can see; but many, it is evident from countless testimonies, cannot see *what there is to be seen*. \* \* \* It is only when one is not conscious of himself, that he acknowledges a possible grave. \* \* \* People ask if they shall live after death who have not yet lived at all, and the only answer is, *Live Now!*

The third of the elements in which we live according to apostle and poet, and by the apostle's words the greatest of the three, is Love. It needs no rehearsing that love is an exceeding

great joy, the most blissful of all human powers. Love seems the faculty which leaps first from God into his creatures; for the poor brutes share it with us, even sometimes to its most woe-ful ecstasies. Heart-binding deeds are like white-clad priests feeding an altar of memory with perpetual flame. Even thought and worship draw sweetness from human love. The simple pure devotion of loving is the deepest well of blessedness, yea, of power, compared to which the privilege of being loved is as naught.

Love is in two kinds; impersonal or human love, which surrounds humanity with solicitous interest and sets fire to heroism; and personal love, of lovers, of friends, of relations, which selects few. Belike this love of chosen persons was not in Paul's mind when he wrote, but surely it was in the poet's.

Now, this is to be said, that the second kind of love, the love of persons chosen by us, will not be noble, nor have wings for the heavens, but plod on the earth meanly, unless the first kind, the humane love, be also living in the heart. This it is which lifts human love into human resemblance; for it is doubtful if any man had ever a devotion to another, more perfect than some brute creatures have shown. But love which is tender to its own sometimes is seen in a nature ferocious and implacable toward others, or moved to little pity and no affection by mankind. But it is not very grand to love simply so far as some person is one's own. It is noble to love first in a beloved person a fairer sight which we have received by him of traits that make humanity sacred and draw us devoutly to our race. It is noble, too, to be quickened by one love to all other loves, so that by our friend we become a friend to man. And, when we think of it, how indeed is it possible to love some person nobly if we love not the better our human kind which has in every child thereof so much that is in his soul whom we love? Or how is it possible to be stirred unto anyone with love having a moral worth, an ethical reverence and mental communion, if never before we have been moved to love and brotherliness by human nature, nor adored the heights of virtue where saintly souls, historic or obscure, have lived? Is it any better to love a skinful of bones than to cherish a bag of coins—if both only because they are

one's own? But if we cherish the body because of a good and precious soul therein dwelling, how is this possible if we love not the like soul in mankind? Nay, the poet who utters my text recommends even the love (if so we may name the sentiment) of natural objects, trees, flowers, brooks, all natural beauties, as a source of the refining, elevating and strengthening of love in us. He says:

"The man  
 Who in this spirit communes with the forms  
 Of nature, who with understanding heart  
 Doth know and love such objects as excite  
 No morbid passions, no disquietude,  
 No vengeance and no hatred needs must feel  
 The joy of that pure principle of love  
 So deeply, that unsatisfied with aught  
 Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose,  
 But seek for objects of a kindred love  
 In fellow natures, and a kindred joy.  
 Accordingly he by degrees perceives  
 His feelings of aversion softened down ;  
 A holy tenderness pervades his frame.  
 His sanity of reason not impaired,  
 Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,  
 From a clear fountain flowing, he looks around  
 And seeks for good ; and finds the good he seeks ;  
 Until abhorrence and contempt are things  
 He only knows by name ; and, if he hear  
 From other mouths the language which they speak,  
 He is compassionate ; and has no thought,  
 No feeling which can overcome his love."

True it is, and let us be very sure of it, that he who feels but little for the human family of God, will not be the best lover of any one thereof; nor will he who has no brotherhood glowing in him ready to burst into flame at human heroism or suffering, love you the better for your own obscure sacred devotion; nor he who looks with apathy on the struggles of mankind, be the most quick to a comrade's pain. He whose love you best may trust, that it will endure through all storms, sorrow, good or ill report, is he whose love of you roots in the same things which transport him with mingled awe and joy when he looks on the countenance of the One in the Many, beholding the struggles of his brother men.

Now abide Faith (or, in the poet's phrase, Admiration) Hope and Love. By Hope the soul is exalted and bred in grand thoughts of the meaning of the things provided for us.

This is life. By Admiration the mind lifts all things to an eternal lineage, and the

"heart is at the secret source  
Of every precious thing."

This is religion. By Love we exalt all mankind to a station of honor. This is fellowship. By Love, also, one sets on high another, to glorify and cherish him, and mingle with him to the production of a common nature which is not either one of them but both in one. This is a blessed communion.

